

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ISO-00 IOE-00 AID-05 CU-02

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USIA-06 AGR-05 HEW-02 OES-03 /082 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4504

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

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AMCONSUL MONTREAL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 2871

NEA/ARN FOR AMBASSADOR PICKERING

PARIS FOR UNESCO

ROME FOR FODAG

VIENNA FOR IAEA AND UNIDO

MONTREAL FOR ICAO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, UNDP, JO

SUBJECT: CERP-0008-EVALUATION OF UN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

REF: STATE 064907

1. THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN JORDAN HAS
ABOUT 20 MAJOR PROJECTS AND AN EXPATRIATE STAFF OF 65. EMBASSY/
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USAID PERSONNEL HAVE FEW OPPORTUNITIES TO OBSERVE THE WORK OF

UN EXPERTS IN THE FIELD. COMMENTS ON UNDP PROGRAM, THEREFORE, COME MAINLY FROM OBSERVERS IN THE GOJ OR UNDP ITSELF. WITH THESE LIMITATIONS IN MIND, THE FOLLOWING ARE OUR ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS IN PARAGRAPH 5 OF REFTEL (LETTERS CORRESPOND WITH QUESTIONS):

A. UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE SEEMS TO BE EFFECTIVE HEAD OF ALL UNDP ACTIVITIES IN JORDAN. HE WAS DEPUTY RESREP HERE FEW YEARS AGO AND RETURNED AS RESREP AT REQUEST OF THE GOJ. HE HAS GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT. WHILE WE CANNOT COMMENT ON HIS RELATIONS WITH ALL UN AGENCIES AT HEADQUARTERS LEVEL, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OBSERVE HIS WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE HEAD OF FAO AND CAN TESTIFY THAT IT IS CLOSE AND EFFECTIVE ONE. IBRD IS EXECUTING AGENCY FOR UNDP PROJECT HERE AND BANK ACTIVITIES ARE COORDINATED WITH UNDP. UNICEF HAS A REPRESENTATIVE (JORDANIAN) HERE, WHO WORKS UNDER UNICEF REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN BEIRUT. UNICEF HAS NOT PARTICIPATED IN UNDP COUNTRY PROGRAMMING.

B. THE GOJ HAS NOT ESTABLISHED ANY FORMAL MECHANISM FOR COORDINATING EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE. TO COMPENSATE FOR ABSENCE OF GOJ EFFORT THE RESREP INITIATED INFORMAL PERIODIC LUNCHEONS AT WHICH REPRESENTATIVES OF MAJOR BILATERAL DONORS DISCUSS ACTIVITIES AND PLANS. THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL PARTICIPATES PERIODICALLY IN THESE MEETINGS AS WELL. THE RESREP WORKS EASILY AND OPENLY WITH ALL MAJOR BILATERAL DONORS IN JORDAN AND PLAYS LOW KEY COORDINATING ROLE. HE HAS ALSO RECOMMENDED--THUS FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS-- THAT GOJ SET UP ARRANGEMENTS TO BRING THE VARIOUS DONORS TOGETHER.

C. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THE RESREP HAS NOT ACTED FOR OTHER BODIES OR COORDINATED DISASTER RELIEF EFFORTS HERE. THERE ARE OVER 800,000 PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN EAST JORDAN AND UNRWA ADMINISTERS A LARGE PROGRAM OF FOOD ASSISTANCE AND EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL SERVICES TO THOSE ELIGIBLE. RESREP IS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN UNRWA ACTIVITIES. SIMILARLY, HE ALSO HAS ONLY SUPERFICIAL CONTACT WITH UN TRUCE SUPERVISION ORGANIZATION (UNTSO) IN AMMAN. WE DOUBT THAT MORE ACTIVE ROLE VIS-A-VIS EITHER OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS IS WARRANTED.

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D. THE COUNTRY PROGRAM REVIEW OF JORDAN IS NOW IN PROGRESS. ALTHOUGH EXECUTING AGENCY AND GOJ COUNTERPART MINISTRY PERSONNEL ARE INVOLVED, MAIN PARTICIPANTS ARE FROM UNDP AND THE GOJ NATIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL. WE HAVE NOT BEEN IN POSITION TO ASSESS QUALITY OR EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM REVIEW.

E. USAID/JORDAN MAINTAINS CLOSE CONTACT WITH RESREP

THROUGH LUNCH MEETINGS MENTIONED ABOVE, PLUS FREQUENT CONTACT BETWEEN AIDREP AND UNDP RESREP. RESREP HAS BEEN VERY WILLING TO DISCUSS PROGRAM CONTENT AND DIRECTION. HE RECENTLY PROVIDED DRAFT DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR FAO DRYLAND AGRICULTURAL PROJECT NOW UNDER DISCUSSION WITH GOJ.

F. THERE ARE OVER 20 MAJOR UNDP PROJECTS CONCENTRATED PRIMARILY IN EDUCATION AND AGRICULTURE. AS WE HAVE NO EXPERTS WORKING ALONGSIDE UN PERSONNEL, OUR IMPRESSIONS OF UNDP PROJECTS ARE BASED ON INFREQUENT OBSERVATIONS AND OUTSIDE SOURCES. WFP RURAL SELF HELP PROJECTS HAVE BEEN GENERALLY SUCCESSFUL. ACCEPTANCE OF THESE AND SIMILAR PROJECTS HAS BEEN SUCH THAT REQUESTS FROM VILLAGERS FOR SELF HELP ASSISTANCE HAS EXCEEDED RESOURCES AVAILABLE. A PRE-VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROJECT APPEARS SUCCESSFUL AND NEW PROJECT FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR HOTEL WORKERS SEEMS TIMELY AND IS MOVING FORWARD. THE DRYLAND AGRICULTURAL PROJECT IN KARAK AREA ENCOUNTERED MANY PROBLEMS AND IS NOW BEING PHASED OUT. HOWEVER, UNDP IS USING DIFFICULTIES AND LESSONS LEARNED ON KARAK PROJECT TO IMPROVE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSED NEW DRYLAND PROJECT MENTIONED ABOVE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 AMMAN 2871

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PRIVATE EMPLOYERS AND THE GOJ INCREASINGLY COMPLAIN OF SHORTAGES AND HIGH TURNOVER OF QUALIFIED STAFF. ACCORDING TO UNDP OFFICIAL, GOJ ATTEMPTS TO NAME EFFECTIVE COUNTER-PARTS TO UN TECHNICIANS, BUT SHORTAGES AND A HIGH TURNOVER RATE ARE REFLECTED IN GOJ STAFF ASSIGNED TO UNDP PROJECTS. THIS IS PERSISTENT PROBLEM FACED BY ALL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE-TYPE PROJECTS IN JORDAN.

G. THE ANNUAL TRIPARTITE REVIEW OF LARGE SCALE PROJECTS

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IS ABOUT HALF COMPLETED. IN SOME CASES, HEADQUARTERS STAFF OF THE EXECUTING AGENCIES HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE REVIEW, TOGETHER WITH LOCAL STAFF OF THESE AGENCIES, RESREP AND HOST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. A UNDP OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT THEY FEEL THE REVIEW HAS SO FAR, BEEN REASONABLY SUCCESSFUL. THE EMBASSY IS REALLY NOT CLOSE ENOUGH TO EVALUATION PROCESS OR TO THE VARIOUS PROJECTS TO MAKE INDEPENDENT JUDGMENTS. H. UNDP ATTEMPTS TO INVOLVE WOMEN, BUT THERE ARE NO PROJECTS SPECIFICALLY FOR WOMEN. THERE ARE A FEW WOMEN EXPERTS WORKING IN UNDP PROJECTS HERE. OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT UNDP IS PROBABLY DOING AS WELL AS ANYONE IN THIS FIELD, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT DIFFICULTIES INHERENT IN PRESSING THIS CASE IN THE ARAB WORLD.

2. WE WOULD LIKE TO ADD A FEW COMMENTS WHICH DON'T FIT INTO THE SPECIFIC AREAS COVERED BY QUESTIONS ANSWERED ABOVE.

A. FIRST, AN ISSUE WE RAISED LAST YEAR BUT WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE. DESPITE LAUDABLE UN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS APPROACH TO COUNTRY PROGRAMMING, IT HAS NOT GONE VERY FAR IN STRENGTHENING ITS MISSIONS IN THIS REGARD. THE UNDP MISSION IN JORDAN DOES NOT HAVE ANY PLANNING OR ANALYSIS STAFF ATTACHED TO THE RESREP'S OFFICE OTHER THAN ONE YOUNG OFFICER WHO FUNCTIONS PRIMARILY AS SPECIAL ASSISTANT. THERE ARE NO ECONOMISTS OR PROGRAM OFFICERS COMPETENT TO UNDERTAKE COMPLEX PROJECT DESIGN OR EVALUATION FUNCTIONS WHICH SHOULD BE PART OF ANY COUNTRY PROGRAMMING EXERCISE. EVEN THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES DO NOT APPEAR TO BE STAFFED

FOR SUCH FUNCTIONS. THUS BURDEN FALLS ALMOST ENTIRELY ON RESREP HIMSELF WITH SUPPORT OF HIS DEPUTY. YET BOTH OF THESEMEN HAVE HEAVY ADMINISTRATIVE AND REPRESENTATIONAL ROLES. WITHOUT STAFF RESOURCES WE DOUBT THAT THE ANALYSIS, PROGRAM PLANNING, PROGRAM REVIEWS AND EVALUATION CAN ACHIEVE STANDARDS IMPLIED BY SERIES OF QUESTIONS CONTAINED REFTEL. IN ADDITION, UNLESS RESREP HAS AT LEAST SMALL PLANNING AND ANALYSIS STAFF, HIS ABILITY TO SHAPE AND INTEGRATE THE VARIOUS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES IS LIMITED.

B. WITHIN LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY INADEQUATE STAFFING MENTIONED ABOVE, RESREP IN JORDAN DOES EXCELLENT JOB. HE IS PROFESSIONAL WHO ENTERED UN SEVERAL YEARS AGO AS TRAINEE OF SOME SORT. HE IS WELL TRAINED, HAS HAD GOOD EXPERIENCE AND REPRESENT UN WELL. PARTLY BECAUSE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS EARLIER STINT AS DEPUTY RESREP HE WAS ALREADY WELL-ESTABLISHED LOCALLY WHEN HE ARRIVED TO TAKE OVER HIS PRESENT POSITON. HE MOVES EASILY IN GOVERNMENT AND APPEARS TO HAVE CONFIDENCE OF LEADERSHIP BOTH IN GOVERNMENT AND AT PALACE. BECAUSE OF THIS, HE WAS ASKED BY CROWN PRINCE AND PRIME MINISTER TO ARRANGE FOR OVERALL EXAMINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS IN DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION FIELD. WEAKNESSES IN THIS AREA APPEAR TO BE LARGEST SINGLE OBSTACLE TO DEVELOPMENT IN JORDAN, BUT THEY ARE AT SAME TIME VERY SENSITIVE MATTERS POLITICALLY. FACT THAT RESREP WAS ASKED TO HELP IS EVIDENCE OF HIGH REGARD IN WHICH HE IS HELD. HE HAS APPROACHED MATTER CIRCUMSPECTLY BUT AT SAME TIME HAS KEPT EMBASSY AND USAID INFORMED ON PROGRESS. ALTHOUGH WE WOULD PREFER THAT THIS SUBJECT NOT BE RAISED IN MEETINGS WITH UN HEADQUARTERS SINCE IT IS NOT BEING TREATED PUBLICLY HERE, WE CITE IT AS ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF RESREP IN JORDAN.

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